



Kullu Call

for the Recognition of the Importance of Common Pool Resources (CPRs) and Pastoralism for India's Livestock Sector

With the purpose of creating visibility for pastoralism - a livestock production system that is gaining increased international recognition¹ but not recognized officially by Indian policy makers - fourteen experts from all over India met in Kullu (Himachal Pradesh) from 13-15 May, 2016 to define the term in the Indian context and establish a methodology for estimating numbers and assessing trends².

The experts noted that the principles of pastoralism are different than those underlying conventional agriculture in which native vegetation is replaced with cultivated crops or sown pasture. By contrast, pastoralism makes use of available vegetation or crop by-products, requires no fuel or fertilizer (in fact contributes organic fertilizer), makes it possible to produce food in marginal areas (deserts, high mountains) and unlikely

¹Pastoral Knowledge Hub of FAO <http://www.fao.org/pastoralist-knowledge-hub/en/>, Policy Framework for Pastoralism of the African Union <http://rea.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Policy%20Framework%20for%20Pastoralism.pdf>

² There are no recent data or even estimates on the number of pastoralists in India, although there is a frequently repeated statement that they make up 6% of the Indian population, apparently based on KHURANA, I. (1999) The Milk that Ate the Grass. Down to Earth, April 15, 1999: 24-31

ecological niches (for instance marine areas), besides benefitting local flora and fauna. Furthermore, these systems are able to adapt to climate change.

The participants went about calculating the number of pastoralists statewide, using various sources of data, including human, livestock, and breed census data, own field data and observations, numbers of grazing permits, etc.

They agreed upon the following criteria as characteristics of pastoralist households: dependence on common pool resources, mobility, primary income from livestock, existence of traditional knowledge systems and association with specific breeds.

A very dynamic picture emerged, characterized by great regional diversity. While Himalayan pastoralism appears to be stable, due to a system of fixed grazing permits, in the western states of Rajasthan and Gujarat, pastoralism is under pressure. However on the Deccan Plateau, many non-traditional pastoralists are entering the field, leading to an increase of livestock numbers kept in pastoral systems.

The meeting highlighted the difficulties and gaps of information that prevent the establishment of precise number of pastoralists. Livestock census data are a more reliable source of information than caste based figures because an unknown, but substantial, proportion of members of castes and tribes with a pastoralist identity and heritage have left their traditional occupation. On the other hand, people with no previous history of pastoralism continue to enter the occupation.

While the actual number of pastoralists thus remains fuzzy and they may not number more than 1% of India's population, the experts concluded that around 80% of India's

livestock is kept in extensive systems and dependent on CPRs³. For many smallholders, livestock may not be the primary source of income, yet still make an important contribution to family income or nutrition. The contribution to the Gross National Product is significant, with 65% of India's milk and 74% of its meat deriving from such systems. An increasing number of scientific publications suggest that the animal products generated this way are more nutritious and tastier than those from intensive stall-fed operations.

The experts call for a re-orientation of India's livestock policies from a focus on stall-fed systems, intensification, and breed improvement to the creation of an enabling environment for mobile livestock keeping and especially the conservation and upkeep of Common Pool Resources. Specifically, the experts recommended the following strategies and activities to maintain the strength of India's livestock sector:

1. Recognition of the contribution of extensive livestock systems and pastoralism to the national GDP and to livelihoods.
2. Considering the paucity of data, **field** research and national **census/surveys** to determine numbers and economic contributions of extensive livestock keepers are urgently needed.
3. Development of livestock policies that support extensive livestock keepers and are sensitive to their specific needs, including mobile services.
4. Securing tenure, access and rights to common pool resources for these livestock keepers.
5. Appreciation of the role of pastoralism in adaptation to climate change and in biodiversity conservation.

Kullu, 15 May, 2016

³According to the National Sample Survey, less than 1% of private agricultural land is used for livestock rearing.

Signed by organizations: LIFE-Network, Rainfed Livestock Network, Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan (LPPS), ANTHRA, Foundation for Ecological Security, WOTR, Pathe Pathshala, Sahjeevan, Future Greens, Mitan, Maldhari Vikas Sanghatan.

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